NCA
VOC FOR IOP/FN
NEWS ANALYSIS NO. 1-1773 NOVEMBER 5, 1976
CHARLES MEDD

ELECTION AFTERMATH: RETURN TO NORMALCY

ANNCR:

TEN MONTHS AND TWO DAYS AFTER IT BEGAN, THE NINETEEN SEVENTY-SIX ELECTION YEAR IS FINALLY OVER, AND CHARLES MEDD HAS THESE IMPRESSIONS.

VOICE:

THE POLITICAL STORM-CLOUDS HAVE FINALLY PASSED, AND THIS COUNTRY IS ONCE MORE ENJOYING THE CALM THAT FOLLOWS ELECTION DAY. GONE IS THE DAILY TORRENT OF CAMPAIGN WORDS, ECHOED IN THE NEWS MEDIA ALONG WITH THE RUSH OF STATISTICS THAT SEEMED TO TELL EACH OF US HOW AND WHY WE WOULD VOTE, AND WHY OUR NEIGHBOR MIGHT DO OTHERWISE. IN THE END, EACH VOTER, WITH VARYING DEGREES OF PASSION AND DOUBT, WOULD MAKE UP HIS OWN MIND, AWAIT THE RESULTS, AND ADJUST ACCORDINGLY.

SUCH ADJUSTMENT MIGHT NOT SEEM ALTOGETHER EASY IN NINETEEN SEVENTY-SIX, GIVEN THE PHILOSOPHICAL ISSUES AT STAKE AND THE FACT THAT THE SYMPATHIES OF THE AMERICAN PUBLIC WERE ALMOST EVENLY DIVIDED. AND ALTHOUGH THE NEARLY ONE-HALF OF THE ELECTORATE THAT FOUND ITSELF ON THE LOSING SIDE WOULD LEARN THAT A FEW THOUSAND VOTES HERE AND THERE WOULD HAVE CHANGED THE OUTCOME, THERE IS TODAY LITTLE HAND-WRINGING, AND VIRTUALLY NO CRIES OF DESPAIR.

SEVERAL FACTORS CONTRIBUTE TO THIS AIR OF UNRUFFLED RESIGNATION, AMONG THEM THE NATURE AND CHARACTER OF THE TWO CONTESTANTS. DESPITE THEIR PERSONAL AND POLITICAL DIFFERENCES, NEITHER PRESIDENT FORD NOR PRESIDENT-ELECT CARTER PROMISED OR THREATENED RADICAL CHANGE. NOR DID EITHER MAN GENERATE THE

KIND OF PARTISAN SENTIMENT THAT CAN BE ASSUAGED BY VICTORY ALONE. AFTER A LONG, HARD LOOK AT BOTH CANDIDATES, MOST VOTERS WERE CONVINCED THAT THE CHOICE WAS BETWEEN TWO GOOD AND ABLE MEN WITH DIFFERING APPROACHES TO COMMON GOALS. AND WHATEVER DOUBTS THE VOTERS MAY HAVE HAD WERE QUICKLY PUT TO REST BY THE GRACIOUS EXCHANGE OF MESSAGES BETWEEN THE ADVERSARIES, ONCE THE RESULTS WERE KNOWN.

THE TRANSITION FROM ONE ADMINISTRATION TO ANOTHER IS BY LAW AND PRACTICE AN ORDERLY PROCESS, ALTHOUGH IN RECENT TIMES A PROCESS UNDER SEVERE STRESS. SINCE NINETEEN SIXTY, THE AMERICAN PEOPLE HAVE SEEN EACH OF THEIR ELECTED PRESIDENTS -- KENNEDY, JOHNSON AND NIXON -- REMOVED FROM OFFICE BY EXTRAORDINARY EVENTS. YET, THE SYSTEM WORKED, THE INSTITUTIONS OF GOVERNMENT ONCE AGAIN PROVED MORE DURABLE THAN THOSE WHO RUN IT.

THIS YEAR BROUGHT A RETURN TO NORMALCY. AS THE ELECTION APPROACHED, THE AMERICAN VOTERS AGAIN KNEW THE CHOICE WAS THEIRS TO MAKE, CONFIDENT THAT THEY AN THE REPUBLIC WOULD SURVIVE WHATEVER CHOICE WOULD BE MADE.

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